



The President's Daily Brief

26 December 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Communists in Cambodia have stepped up harassment of government positions in the northwest, with serious implications for prospects for marketing this year's rice crop. (Page 1)

In Jordan, the fedayeen have found the going rough since their clash with the army in Jarash early this month. (Page 2)

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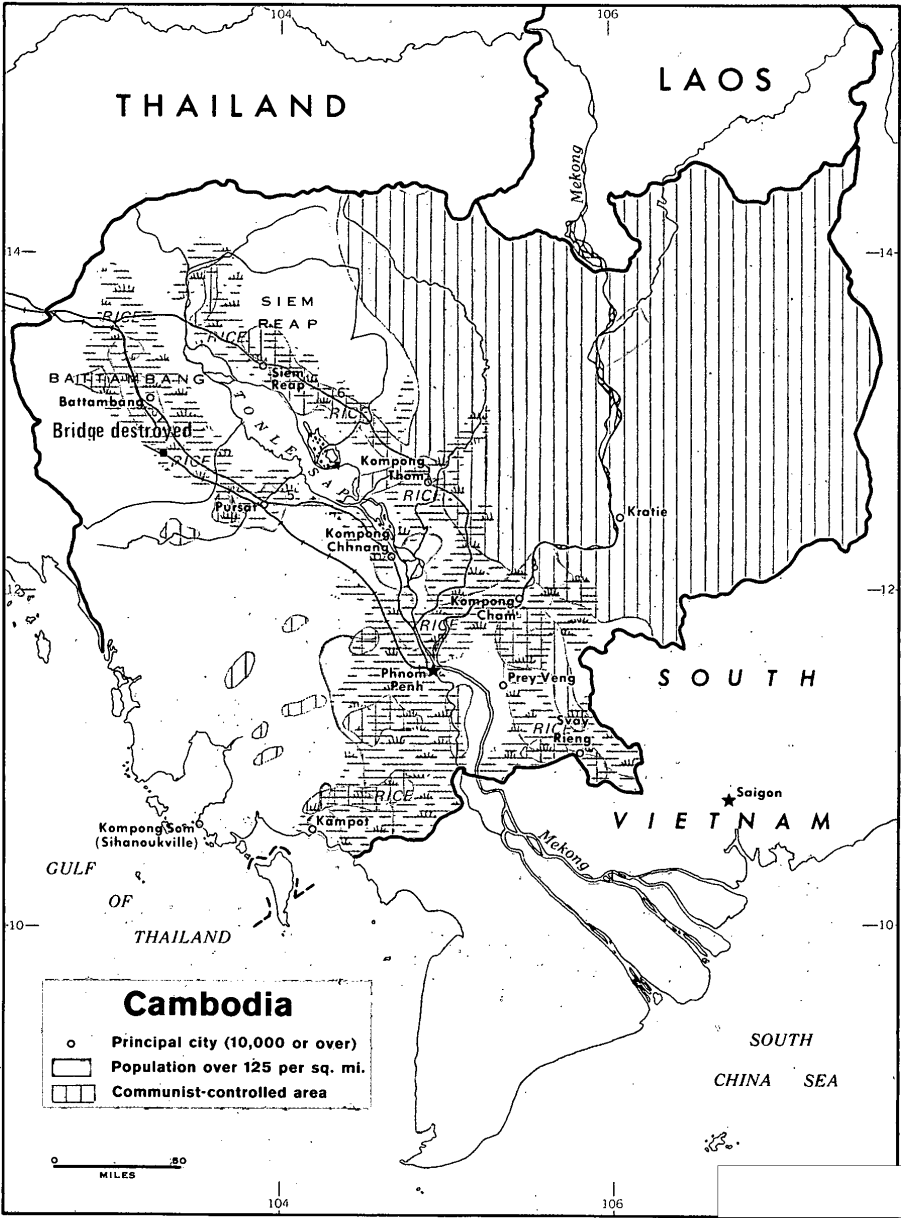
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Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

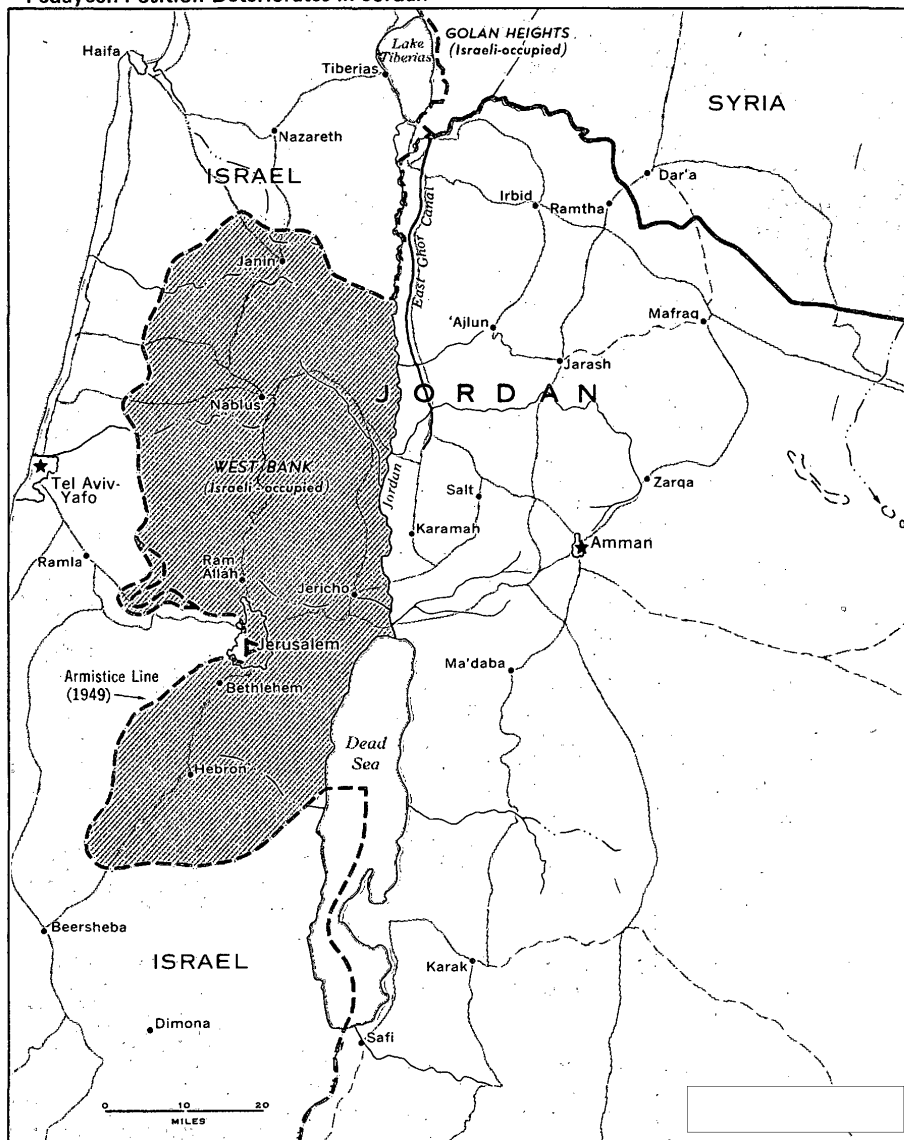
The Communists have stepped up harassment of government positions along Route 5 in the past week and have destroyed a bridge and station on the Battambang railroad. They also have been active in the countryside in the west. There is one report that Pursat city, one of the few provincial capitals that has not been attacked, was the target of harassing fire.

The government has placed five battalions north of Battambang city to block the movement of enemy troops into the area. These forces are also to secure Routes 5 and 6 in the Battambang - Siem Reap provincial border area. They ran into stiff opposition on 22 December, but so far casualties on both sides have been light.

Fresh fighting in the west will further complicate the harvesting and marketing of what promises to be a bumper rice crop. In Battambang, the major rice producing province, growing insecurity and Cambodian Army recruiting have cut sharply into the seasonal influx of labor needed for the harvest. Even if there is a good harvest, little of it may be available for export. Warehouses are nearly full with last year's surpluses because of the lack of civilian transport and enemy road and rail interdictions. Prices now being offered to farmers are one third below last year's level.

Failure to solve these problems could force the government to default on its export commitments and lead to the loss of foreign exchange. The government is seeking alternatives to sending export rice out through the main port of Kompong Som, currently cut off by Communist forces.

Fedayeen Position Deteriorates in Jordan



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JORDAN-FEDAYEEN

Since the clash in Jarash between the army and the fedayeen on 7 December, most of the guerrilla units that had been in the city have been forced to camp out in wooded areas near there and Ajlun [redacted]

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[redacted] Facilities are said to be minimal, food scarce, and morale low. Defections and desertions have risen sharply and as winter sets in are expected to go even higher. Most other urban areas have also been cleared of fedayeen [redacted]

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Several entrenched enclaves of fedayeen remain in Amman, but the army is confident that the remaining positions could be wiped out without much difficulty.

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A US Mission officer who traveled through northern Jordan on 22 December confirms much of this. He says the army was in full control of Jarash, Irbid, Mafrag, and Zarqa. No fedayeen checkpoints were encountered during his trip and no uniformed fedayeen were seen in Jarash or Zarqa. Although Iraqi Army elements remain in the Mafrag area, Crown Prince Hassan told Ambassador Brown on 23 December that the Iraqis have been slowly withdrawing and he hoped that they would soon be down to a division or less.

The weakness of the fedayeen's military dispositions could tempt the army to try for a quick and decisive clean-up of fedayeen concentrations in the north and possibly in Amman as well. Prince Hassan told Ambassador Brown that the fedayeen "will get a real bloody nose" if they do not have their weapons in storage by 26 December, as required by the latest agreement between the fedayeen and the government. The army might want to move in the next few days during the absence of the King, who has been restraining the military.

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NOTES

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USSR: A Galosh ABM interceptor was launched from Sary Shagan on 24 December.

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This was the 23rd firing of the Galosh detected since August 1968 and the eighth this year.

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